

Site Reconnaissance Checklist Hazardous Materials

The purpose of a site reconnaissance is to physically observe a parcel, and any structures on the property, for recognized hazardous environmental conditions. Normally, a site reconnaissance is part of the process for conducting an Initial Site Assessment (ISA). The purpose of an ISA is to conduct all reasonable inquiry into specific parcels of land that may be contaminated and to assess impacts to WSDOT liability, design, and construction.

Site reconnaissance applies only to exterior observations. Section 447.05(7) of the Environmental Procedures Manual (EPM) provides information regarding the assessment of interior conditions, such as asbestos and lead paint.

Before performing a site reconnaissance for property not owned by WSDOT, verify whether a temporary easement (right-of-entry) will be required. For more information, refer to Section 447.05(9) of the EPM or contact Regional Real Estate Services (RES).

The attached checklist identifies specific features that must be considered while conducting a site reconnaissance. To supplement the checklist, detailed explanations for site observations are provided below.

Detailed Site Observations

- **Current land use** – Identify type of land use.
 - Industrial: Manufacturing and engineering operations.
 - Commercial: Shipping, business and sales operations.
 - Agricultural: Production of crops and/or raising livestock.
 - Residential: Community of homes.
 - *Note:* Identify any operations in the surrounding area that are likely to involve the use, treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous substances or petroleum products in the comment section.
- **Past land use** – If known, identify the type of past land use. Note structures, certain layouts, or equipment, which may indicate history of land use.
- **Above/Underground Storage tanks** – Note any evidence of storage tanks, fill vents, or access ways. Patches in pavement can indicate former locations of tanks or fuel islands.
- **Containers** – **Do NOT open or disturb any containers that are in poor condition or where labeling is absent or unclear as to the contents.** If possible, identify any containers that contain or might contain hazardous substances or petroleum products in the comment section. Try and include the approximate quantities involved, types of containers, and storage conditions.

- **Dry wells, water wells and septic systems** – Auto repair, service stations and laundry facilities are some of the typical business operations known to illegally dump contamination into domestic wells and septic systems. If dumping is suspected, sketch a map to identify any wells, drains or septic tanks located on the property. Unlike dry wells, there are specific state regulations for decommissioning domestic water wells that may need to be implemented prior to construction.
- **Asbestos & Lead** – Note any buildings constructed before 1980, as they are presumed to contain asbestos and/or lead based paint.
- **Polychlorinated biPhenyls(PCBs)** – Identify electrical or hydraulic equipment known to contain or likely to contain PCBs (i.e., transformers). Fluorescent light ballasts need not be noted if structure was built after 1977.
- **Stains** – Identify the visual characteristics of stained soils or pavements. Note whether an odor is present.
- **Odors and liquids** – Are there any sources that produce a strong, pungent, or noxious odor? Identify any standing water, pools, or sumps containing known or unknown liquid.
- **Vegetation** – Absence of vegetation, or areas of stressed vegetation other than those due to insufficient water, often indicate improper disposal of chemicals or overuse of pesticides. If it is suspected that vegetation is damaged by contamination, use the comment section to describe observations.
- **Interviews** – If interviews are conducted, obtain information from property owners, neighbors, and key managers for commercial properties who may be able to provide information about possible hazardous environmental conditions. Details resulting from an interview can be included in the comment section.